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SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Peter GOOSEN (South Africa)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The item entitled "Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security" was included in the provisional agenda of the forty-ninth session in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/66 of 16 December 1993.

2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 23 September 1994, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.

3. At its 2nd meeting, on 13 October, the First Committee decided to hold a general debate on all disarmament and international security items allocated to it, namely, items 53 to 66, 68 to 72 and 153. The deliberations on those items took place at the 3rd to 10th meetings, from 17 to 24 October (see A/C.1/49/SR.3-10). Structured discussions of specific subjects on the adopted thematic approach took place from 25 to 27 and on 31 October and 1 November. Consideration of draft resolutions on those items took place at the 12th to 16th meetings, on 3, 4, 7 and 9 November (see A/C.1/49/PV.12-16). Action on draft resolutions on those items took place at the 19th to 25th meetings, from 14 to 18 November (see A/C.1/49/PV.19-25).

4. In connection with item 54, the First Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security (A/49/502);

(b) Letter dated 15 September 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/49/422-S/1994/1086).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.1/49/L.32

5. On 2 November, Bhutan, Bolivia, Colombia, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Nigeria and Sri Lanka submitted a draft resolution entitled "Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security" (A/C.1/49/L.32), which was later also sponsored by Costa Rica. The draft resolution was introduced by the representative of India at the 14th meeting, on 7 November.

6. At its 20th meeting, on 15 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/49/L.32 by a recorded vote of 92 to 4, with 46 abstentions (see para. 7). The voting was as follows: 1/

In favour: Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: France, Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Eritrea, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia,

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1/ Subsequently, the delegation of Djibouti indicated that it had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine.

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

7. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security

The General Assembly,

Recalling that at its tenth special session, the first special session devoted to disarmament, it unanimously stressed the importance of both qualitative and quantitative measures in the process of disarmament,

Recognizing that scientific and technological developments can have both civilian and military applications and that progress in science and technology for civilian applications needs to be maintained and encouraged,

Noting with concern the potential in technological advances for application to military purposes, which could lead to more sophisticated weapons and new weapons systems,

Stressing the interests of the international community in the subject and the need to follow closely the scientific and technological developments that may have a negative impact on the security environment and on the process of arms limitation and disarmament, and to channel scientific and technological developments for beneficial purposes,

Emphasizing that the proposal contained in its resolution 43/77 A of 7 December 1988 is without prejudice to research and development efforts being undertaken for peaceful purposes,

Expressing regret that the Disarmament Commission was unable to develop guidelines from its deliberations under its agenda item entitled "The role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields", 2/

Convinced that genuine non-proliferation can only be achieved when transfer of high technology with military applications is in accordance with universally accepted, multilaterally negotiated non-discriminatory legal treaties,

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2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 42 (A/49/42), para. 6.

1. Welcomes the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security" 3/ submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 48/66 of 16 December 1993;

2. Fully agrees with the assessment that the application of new technologies for a qualitative improvement of weapons systems was seen as detracting from the efforts to reduce and eliminate the existing arsenals; 4/

3. Requests the Secretary-General to follow scientific and technological developments and make a relevant assessment in keeping with the criteria presented to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session 5/ and to submit a report to the Assembly at its fiftieth session;

4. Also requests the Secretary-General to develop a database of concerned research institutions and experts with a view to promoting transparency and international cooperation in the applications of the scientific and technological developments for pursuing disarmament objectives such as disposal of weapons, conversion, verification, among others;

5. Invites all Member States to communicate to the Secretary-General their views and assessments;

6. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fiftieth session the item entitled "Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security".

3/ A/49/502.

4/ Ibid., para. 7.

5/ A/45/568.